

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 1, 2 and 4 to 12.

The above amendment is responsive to points set forth in the Official Action.

In this regard, claim 1 has been amended to exclude the presence of a novolak resin as an alkali-soluble resin. The significance of this amendment will be explained below.

Claims 1, 2 and 4 to 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hishiro et al. (U.S. 5,876,895) (with Miura et al. (2004/0082721 A1) and Naruse et al. (U.S. 5,624,781).

Further, claims 1, 2, 4 to 6 and 9 to 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurata et al. (EP 0 483 693 A2) in view of Hishiro et al. (U.S. 5,876,895).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The copolymer used in the present invention consists essentially of repeating units of "styrene" and "hydroxystyrene". Novolak resins are expressly excluded. The resin compositions of Examples 1, 2 and 3 according to the present invention (which exclude novolaks) have higher light transmittance at a wavelength of 650 nm and the better residual rate of a film after development than those of Examples 4 and 5, which contain a novolak resin.

The cited references use a resin comprising a novolak resin and thus properties of the products of these references should be no better than those of Examples 4 and 5.

Consequently, the presently claimed composition which achieves the unexpected effects described above, are unobvious from the references, alone or in combination.

For the foregoing reasons, the rejections on prior art are untenable and should be withdrawn.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please

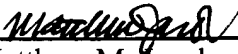
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